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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1385
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2676
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1043
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3063
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2449
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

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SUBJECT: OSH TRIP: VISITS TO USAID PROJECTS REVEAL IMPACT
OF KYRGYZ ELECTRICITY CRISIS

11. (U) Summary: The Ambassador visited three USAID projects as part of her trip to the southern Kyrgyz city of Osh on September 16-17. The stops at a bakery, a seamstress's shop and a center for the visually impaired showed the trouble caused by electricity shortages in a region already beset by infrastructure and social issues. End Summary.

12. (SBU) The Ambassador saw two economic development projects in the Nookat region of Osh Oblast that are part of USAID's four-year, \$3 million Collaborative Development Initiative in southern Kyrgyzstan. The first project was a bakery, run and staffed by women. The manager, Goyahon Iminjanova, explained that the bakery has received credit to buy new ovens. She told the Ambassador there was strong demand for their goods, but they were unable to meet that demand due to electricity cut-offs. She said the blackouts were unpredictable, which makes planning shift work even harder and adds to her expenses.

13. (SBU) The second project was a sewing workshop where the owner, Dilfuza Djumaeva, has taken discounted loans to purchase new sewing machines. Djumaeva told the Ambassador that she trains local women, largely ethnic Uzbeks, on the sewing machines and then hires some of them to work for her permanently. One of her biggest problems, she said, was the turnover of young women she has trained, who are made to quit working when they get married. Djumaeva said she has tried to expand her business, in part to create jobs for the young women left behind to care for themselves and their families when the men in their families depart for work in Russia. All ten of the women at the workshop reported having at least one male member of their household working abroad. Business at the workshop had also suffered because of the electricity shortage, which forces employees to work on the sole manual sewing machine.

14. (U) The Ambassador also visited a two-room center for the visually impaired, supported by the Eurasia Foundation and located in an Osh hospital. The project is part of an initiative to build the capacity of organizations that work with vulnerable groups in society. The center director estimated there about 9000 blind people in southern Kyrgyzstan, though the center plans to work with groups

across the Ferghana Valley. The director explained that visually impaired individuals can receive professional training on machines that use the latest technology for Braille display and reading text.

15. (SBU) Comment: The quality of the roads, plumbing, and buildings themselves decreases markedly as one leaves Osh city. In a part of the country where there are already serious problems with infrastructure and migration, the electricity woes are only making economic development harder.
GFOELLER